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ABSTRACT

A program was designed to improve reading comprehension of first-grade students in one school and second-grade students in another school of an urban neighborhood school district in a medium-sized midwestern city. The problem has been addressed both at the district level and the building level, although scores in reading comprehension have decreased on the standardized tests over the past two years. Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that students were lacking in entry-level skills and prior exposure to reading. In addition, review of curricular content and implementation suggested that an overemphasis was put on the acquisition of skills in isolation rather than reading as a whole. Solution strategies suggested by the professional literature combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention. The first dealt with increasing exposure to books while providing successful experiences in reading. The second focused on activities using a variety of art forms designed to improve skills needed for increased reading comprehension. All symptoms of the original problem were reduced as projected: the students' reading comprehension skills improved through increased exposure to literature and the integration of the arts into the reading curriculum. (Contains 37 references, 4 tables, and 1 figure of data. A checklist for reading comprehension, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, two appendixes of data, and a 44-item list of songs, charts, and repetitive books are attached.) (RS)

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IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF THE ARTS

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Education

Saint Xavier University -IRI
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Action Research Proposal
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Abstract

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DATE: September 1993

TITLE: Improving Reading Comprehension Through the Integration of the Arts

ABSTRACT: This report describes a program for improving reading comprehension of first and second grade students, in an urban neighborhood school, in a medium sized midwestern city. This urban school district is currently undergoing changes as a part of a desegregation lawsuit. Much attention is being given to increasing student success rates in academic areas including reading. The problem has been addressed both at the district level, and the building level, and findings showed that scores in reading comprehension have decreased on the standardized tests over the past two years.

Analysis of the probable cause data revealed students were lacking in entry level skills and prior exposure to reading. In addition, review of curricula content and implementation, suggests that an over emphasis is put on the acquisition of skills in isolation rather than reading as a whole.

Solution strategies suggested by the literature, confirmed by knowledgeable others, and combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major categories of intervention. The first dealt with increasing exposure to books while providing successful experiences in reading. The second focused on activities using a variety of art forms designed to improve skills needed for increased reading comprehension.

All symptoms of the original problem were reduced as projected: the students' reading comprehension skills improved through increased exposure to literature and the integration of the arts into the reading curriculum.

Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

General Statement of Problem

The first grade and the second grade classes at the targeted schools are having difficulty in the area of reading comprehension. This is evidenced by teacher observation, lack of progress in reading, and declining standardized test scores.

Immediate Problem Context of First Grade Setting

There were 552 elementary students in a public school located in the northeast part of the city. The school, which was constructed in 1954, was situated on a city block that had an arboretum, baseball diamond, two tennis courts, a soccer field, and a playground. Students in kindergarten through the sixth grades were served in this 25 room brick building. The school had a primary wing and a secondary wing which was divided by an office and a library. The gym, which also served as a lunchroom, was located on the lower level of the school. The researcher had a rectangular classroom that measured 36 feet by 24 feet. It was equipped with a sink and a bathroom. There were 27 desks to accommodate the students, one teacher's desk, and a reading table.

The student population was ethnically and racially mixed, with 77 percent of the population Caucasian, 9.0 percent of Black descent, 8.0 percent of Asian

decent, 4.0 percent of Hispanic descent, and .0001 American Indian. Forty one percent of the students were bused to school. Four percent were learning disabled, and all of these students received services from the learning disabilities teacher. The attendance rate at the school was 96.1 percent. The socio-economic status covered a wide range, with three percent of the population made up of low income families while a majority of the families were in the middle class income levels.

The elementary school was administered by a building principal, and a head teacher, who took responsibility when the principal was absent. The 21 staff members included two kindergarten teachers, and three teachers at each grade level in the first grades through the sixth grade. The specialists included an art teacher, who met with students once a week, a physical education teacher, who met with the children twice a week, and a music teacher, who met with the children twice a week. A Special Service Team consisted of a school psychologist, a speech clinician, a nurse and a learning disabilities resource teacher. The Special Services Team met every Tuesday to evaluate students or to check teachers' referrals.

The school, called "Academics Plus," offered students in the district an alternative program. The idea originated in 1974 when the principal read about a school in Paladino, California, and he patterned the program from that school. The school provided a structured learning program dedicated to academic excellence. The curriculum was designed for children who were performing at or

above grade level in reading and mathematics. The emphasis in the language arts curriculum was placed upon developing grade level skills in reading, writing, spelling, and listening. The Pegasus Reading Skills Program was a supplement to the basic reading curriculum to help the teachers organize sequential instruction to teach the skills. Assessment and accountability were an integral component of the program. Achievement was measured using the Stanford Achievement Test. Also, results from the language arts, math, and science sections of the Illinois Goal Assessment Program were analyzed to determine the need for curricular adjustments.

To comply with the "People Who Care" lawsuit, there was a lottery system used to determine who would be enrolled in the program. Neighborhood children were automatically admitted, and the remaining openings were then filled by the lottery system. There had to be a minimum of fifteen percent minority representation to meet the district's guidelines. To comply with the second Interim Order, an active recruitment was instituted in the spring of 1993 to attract 30 percent minority for the 1993-1994 school year.

One of the requirements of the school-wide alternative program was parent commitment and involvement. The parents signed a Commitment to Excellence statement showing their understanding of the program. The following are the key components of the program: 1. Emphasis on skill development within all subject areas, 2. Emphasis on mastery of basic academic skills and enrichment. 3. Assessment of each student's achievement through testing, grading and teacher

recommendation for pupil's progress and development, 4. Emphasis on challenging children to do their best work. 5. Accent on family involvement as an integral part of the student's learning experience. A strong family emphasis was assured through the P.T.O., which offered YMCA Family Night, a FUN FAIR, Cabin Fever Night, and an End of the Year Picnic. The Student Council involved parents with two breakfasts: "Muffins for Moms" and "Donuts for Dads." A spring dinner dance at a country club or restaurant brought the parents and teachers together in a social setting.

Immediate Problem Context of Second Grade Setting

The elementary school was located in the northwest quadrant of the city in an urban neighborhood. This school had drawn its population from its surrounding neighborhood, and two-thirds of the population came on buses or were driven to school by parents. Fifty students were bused into the school from high minority areas of the city under a desegregation plan. According to The 1992 School Report Card, the enrollment of this school was 481. This included an early childhood program for at risk three and four year old children, along with regular kindergarten through sixth grade classes. The racial/ethnic background of the school population was as follows: 71.7 percent Caucasian, 22.9 percent Black, 4.0 percent Hispanic, 1.2 percent Asian, and 0.2 percent Native American. The socio-economic status was very diverse with a 28.5 percent in the low income range.

The staff at this school consisted of eighteen classroom teachers, and one principal. There was a full time art teacher, physical education teacher, and part time music teacher. The special services team consisted of the full time learning disabilities (L.D.) teacher, a half time L.D. teacher, and part time nurse, social worker, psychologist, and speech teacher. The school also had a Chapter One reading teacher and aide, a library aide, speech aide and part time computer aide. A program for three and four year olds was "Success in Early Education before Kindergarten" (SEEK) had two classroom teachers and two aides. The school had two custodians and one secretary.

The school had an active parent organization. A group or parents and teachers, along with the principal, worked on a mission statement and goals for the school. An action plan for the school was in progress. The building itself was erected in 1957. There were three wings with twenty-three classrooms, and a dividing gym. The classrooms housed the eighteen SEEK through sixth grade classes. In addition, there were separate rooms for art, music, a library and a learning center/computer lab facility. There were also smaller rooms for the speech, reading, and L.D. teachers. Students go to art, music and P.E. once or twice a week with the specialists. Those subjects were supplemented by the classroom teacher.

The classroom in this study was in the east wing of the building, which had the kindergarten through second grades. The class size was twenty one, with ten girls and eleven boys. Eleven of those children were in a Chapter One "pull out"

program and received additional help in reading one half hour a day.

The Surrounding Community

This study was administered in the second largest city of a Midwestern state. Located 75 miles from a large metropolitan center, the city covered fifty square mile area. The 1990 census showed the population of the city to be 139,426. Of that population, 13.4 were below poverty level. The city was a manufacturing community with a per capita income of $14,109.00. There were high employment concentrations in machining, metal working and transportation equipment industries. Additional sources of employment included services, retail trade, government and wholesale trade. Data on adults twenty-five years of age and over showed that 74.8 had completed high school or higher and 18.17 percent had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The census figures also showed that 77.9 percent of the population was Caucasian, 14.4 percent was Black, 4.0 percent was Hispanic, 1.5 percent was Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2 percent was Native American and 2.0 percent was comprised of other races.

The school district was composed of 39 elementary schools, four middle schools and four high schools. The total enrollment of the district was 28,045 students. The racial and ethnic background of the student population as of September 30, 1992, was as follows: Caucasian-68.1 percent, Black-23.4 percent, Hispanic-5.8 percent, Asian/Pacific Islander-2.5 percent, and Native American-0.3 percent. The ethnic background of the district's 1,718 teachers was as follows:

Caucasian-92.7 percent, Black-5.0 percent, Hispanic-1.2 percent, Asian-0.9 percent and Indian/Alaskan-0.3 percent.

The school district had a history of financial difficulties. In 1978 arts, sports, and extra curricular activities were eliminated in the schools because of the failure of a tax referendum to support those programs. Insufficient revenue was a continuous threat to this school district.

During May of 1989, a lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court against the school district. The lawsuit charged the district with long-time discrimination against minority students. An interim agreement was being implemented in the school district. The court order called for three magnet elementary schools. Two were in operation and the third was to open in 1993. The magnet schools drew white students to predominantly minority areas. Minority students had the opportunity to attend schools in predominantly white areas through voluntary transfers. During the 1993-93 school year, 27.9 percent of the elementary students attended a school outside their "attendance area." All high schools and middle schools were integrated for the 1992-93 school year. Twenty seven of the thirty nine elementary schools were integrated under the district's voluntary transfer program. The interim court order provided monies to implement in-service training and materials for the magnet schools. The school district was also undertaking a change from basic school organization to one of site-based management. The plan called for each school to develop a mission statement, complete long range goals and develop specific action plans to carry out the goals.

In November of 1992, the superintendent of schools resigned and an assistant superintendent was named "Interim Superintendent." A firm was hired to conduct a national search for a new superintendent. The position was filled in January of 1994. The community was becoming more involved in shaping the educational goals of the district. A parent center was in operation, and an ad hoc committee was being led by a group of eight local businessmen.

Regional and National Context of Problem

The human and financial costs of illiteracy are astronomical. Our prisons are filled with high school dropouts with low reading ability. A year of prison costs more than a year of schooling at Harvard. Corporate America estimates it will spend at least $30 billion annually to teach its workers reading, math, and writing skills. (Barker, 1990)

According to the National Academy of Educator's Commission on Reading in a report called Becoming a Nation of Readers, how children learn to read is known but this knowledge is not being used. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson, 1985) One of the recommendations made was that more classroom time should be spent on reading comprehension and less on isolated skills. Richard Anderson, the chief author of Becoming a Nation of Readers, stated that reading programs are out of balance, that they place too much emphasis on small bits and pieces of knowledge and skills, and there is little attention given to the integrated act of reading or, for that matter, to the integrated act of writing.

(Anderson, 1985) For the past twenty years the heart of our literacy problem has been the dangerous notion that all youngsters should be taught in the same way and that failure is nearly always the fault of the student. (Carbo, 1990)

There are many approaches that have been developed to address the issue of reading comprehension, ranging from basal reading instruction to whole language. A panel discussion of five educators discussed these issues in literacy education. Aaron et al (1990) noted that there are two extreme issues: the whole language and literature-based instruction, and the skill oriented, basal reader instruction. Teachers become locked into one approach rather than having a holistic point of view in the teaching of reading. Teachers need to have the best information on materials and the strategies to use in order to make good decisions in developing reading programs. In responding to this, Goodman (1990) pointed out that in the last ten years teachers have come to their own decision on which approach to take. They have not relied on the basal reader or the reading supervisor (Aaron, et al, 1990).

The meaning in reading is personal. The readers should be brought to the text with their own background and experiences. Comprehension is an evolving process heightened by interaction (Shanklin and Rhodes, 1989). Preschoolers and primary students make sense of their world by playing, singing, participating in artistic activities, and dramatic play. Once in school, these past times gradually give way to structured activities because of parental pressure and traditional schooling. The natural process or expressive maturation, therefore, does not

occur (Goldberg 1992). Instead, subjects are presented as separate entities, resulting in a lack of continuity and purpose. In Beaveron, Oregon, a Chapter One reading program included expressive arts to expand meaning in reading. Whole class dramatics, Reader's Theater, and dramatizing favorite literature, enhanced understanding of reading and provided stimulus for writing. This involved the learner's affective and cognitive self and linked learning to real life. Reading comprehension is not transferring information from the printed page to children's heads, or using questioning strategies about stories, but comes from a personal interpretation of what is read (Hoyt, 1992). Hanna (1992) found that "research in the arts and related fields, from Africa to the Americas, demonstrates that the arts can motivate the cognitive, social, civic, personal, and aesthetic growth and development of students." (p. 607)

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Background

The reading comprehension problem has been a concern for many years. The National Academy of Educator's Commission on Reading has addressed this issue in their 1985 report on Becoming a Nation of Readers. In their report they looked at reading as a basic life skill not attained in a single step, but as a journey that involves many steps (Anderson, 1985). Their concerns pointed out that with the movement toward a technological information age, there is an increased need for a high level of literacy. What was an acceptable level of literacy in the 1950's would be marginal by the twenty first century (Anderson et al, 1985).

According to Project Literacy U.S., more than twenty-three million American adults cannot read and write sufficiently and a growing number of high school drop outs are contributing to this problem of illiteracy. This program also pointed out that while children may be able to read and write in school, they are not transferring these skills to real life situations (Routman, 1988).

Locally, the school district's goals were that all grade levels score at the 66th percentile in reading by 1996. In working toward this goal, varied strategies and programs were implemented in several schools throughout the district. The Success for All, developed at John Hopkins University, was adopted by six schools. In this program every reader was at the same level and read together no matter what the grade level. There was a ninety minute reading block with the

use of tutors. Other schools were trained in and implemented Reading Recovery. This was an early intervention program started in the first grade. Two teachers shared the job and children were tutored in reading for one-half hour. The program intervened at the first stages of a reading problem before the children saw themselves as failures at reading. The Chapter One Reading Program, which was traditionally a pull out program used as a diagnostic and prescriptive measure, became more compatible and integrated with the classroom teacher's agenda. The basic reading programs at the remaining elementary schools relied on the use of the basal, supplemented with a variety of literature-based and whole language techniques. These programs were in their second year. For the most part, the evaluation had been done with the district-wide standardized testing. It was not felt that the programs had been in place long enough to evaluate their effectiveness in raising reading scores (Sauer, 1993).

Problem Evidence

Both subjective and objective means were used to investigate the reading comprehension problem at the first and second grade level. The Stanford Achievement Tests were given in the spring of 1992 and 1993 at both schools in this study. Figure 1 shows the reading comprehension scores of students at or above the 50th national percentile. Sixty-six percent of the first graders were at or above the 50th percentile in 1992, while the percentage dropped to sixty-two percent in 1993. At the second grade site, the scores showed thirty-seven percent

of the students at or above the 50th national percentile for 1992. In 1993 the percentage dropped to twenty-three percent of students at or above the 50th national percentile. An examination of the data indicated a need for intervention in the area of reading comprehension. This data is illustrated in Figure 1.

A Checklist for Reading Comprehension was developed by the teacher researchers to understand student problems in the different components of reading comprehension (Appendix A). The data from the checklist indicated four major areas to be examined; 1) predictions 2) word meaning 3) main idea 4) sequencing. Thirty-two percent of the first graders and thirty-three percent of the second graders rarely were able to make predictions about the story. Forty-four percent of the first graders and fifty-two percent of the second graders seldom were able to determine word meaning through context. Data indicated that forty percent of the first graders and forty-three percent of the second graders could not tell the main idea of the story. The last area of concern was the inability of the students to retell a story in sequence. Figures showed that forty percent of the first graders and forty-seven percent of the second graders experienced difficulty in sequencing.

An analysis of the data collected, indicated that a need or a critical need for a combination of both good literature and new techniques in presentation of reading should be considered. This data supported teacher observations made during the first month of school in the classroom setting.

Reading Comprehension

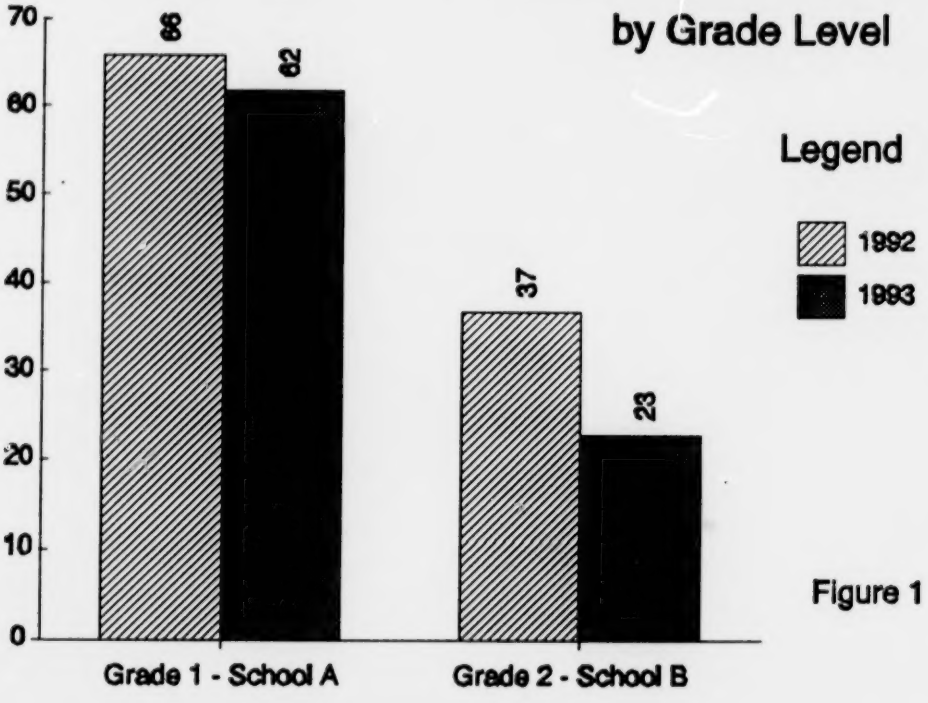

Figure 1

Summary of Findings of Problem Evidence

Reading Comprehension from 1992-1993 Stanford Achievement Tests, by school and grade level. Students at or above the 50th national percentile.

Probable Causes of Problem

Data to indicate probable cause factors were gathered from the students themselves in the form of an attitude's survey. Input from the parents was also gained by the use of a questionnaire. The teacher researchers distributed a questionnaire to the parents of their students (Appendix B). Of the twenty-five questionnaires sent out to the first grade parents, twenty-one were returned. Of the twenty-one questionnaires sent out to second grade parents, seventeen were returned. Parents' perceptions of their children as readers showed that ninety-five percent of the first grade students like to be read to often and forty-one percent of the second graders liked to be read to often. Parents noted that thirty-three percent of the first graders and twenty-four percent of the second graders were unable to make predictions about a story's ending. Thirty-three percent of the first graders and fifty-two percent of the second graders were perceived by parents to have confidence as readers. Parents reported that thirty-three percent of the first graders and forty-seven percent of the second graders read less than three days a week. Some reading concerns that parents mentioned about their children were those dealing with word attack skills and experiencing frustration and lacking confidence as readers.

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (EARS) was given to the first and second grade students of the teacher-researchers. McKenna and Kear (1990) developed the survey after researching the connection between attitude and achievement in reading. After administering a prototype survey to a school

district, it was revised and given to a national sample of over 18,000 students in first through sixth grades. Estimates of reliability and evidence of validity was based on this survey (Appendix C).

The survey given to the classes in this study showed that there was a sizable difference (5 points or more) between recreational and academic percentile scores (Appendix D and Appendix E). Some children preferred recreational over academic reading, while others preferred academic over recreational reading. What was significant was the overall number of students who had poor attitudes toward reading, whether it be academic or recreational. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the number of first and second grade students and the percentage of those students who scored in the four percentile ranges.

Table 1

Number and Percent of First Grade Students in Percentile Ranges
Pretest of ERAS, Recreational and Academic
September 1993

	Recreational		Academic	
	Pretest		Pretest	
%ile Range	#	%	#	%
76-99	6	24	6	24
51-75	8	32	6	24
26-50	8	32	10	40
0-25	3	12	3	12

N = 25

Table 2

Number and Percent of Second Grade Students in Percentile Ranges
Pretest of ERAS, Recreational and Academic
September 1993

	Recreational		Academic	
	Pretest		Pretest	
%ile Range	#	%	#	%
76-99	4	19	2	10
51-75	2	10	8	38
26-50	7	33	8	38
0-25	8	38	3	14

N = 21

Using the pretest results, twelve percent of the first graders and thirty-eight percent of the second graders were at or below the twenty-fifth percentile range in their attitude toward recreational reading. Attitudes toward academic reading showed that twelve percent of the first graders and fourteen percent of the second graders were at or below the twenty-fifth percentile range. These students showed the most need for a different approach to reading instruction.

Summary data showed a need, indicated by the percent of students who appeared between the 26th and 50th percentile range in recreational and academic reading attitudes. Thirty-two percent of the first graders were between this range for recreational reading and forty percent for academic reading. Thirty-three percent of the second graders fell in this range for recreational reading and thirty-eight percent for academic reading. The results indicated a rise in the

number of students with poor attitudes toward recreational reading as they progressed from first to second grade. This data is an indicator to the teacher researchers that the students need positive experiences in the area of reading.

A summary of the probable cause data gathered from the problem sites permitted the following conclusions: parents saw their children as being apprehensive and frustrated when asked to read, and students' attitudes toward reading were poor indicating a low self image as a reader.

Probable cause data from the literature was categorized into problems dealing with family background, the child as a learner, and the teacher's instructional delivery.

In the report, "Becoming a Nation of Readers," it was pointed out that children enter grade school at varying degrees of readiness to read (Anderson et al, 1988). Children coming from homes where stories were not read to them, displayed more frustration and confusion in the classroom reading groups. Failure was experienced because they had not had the repetition of stories and the exposure to print (McCracken, R and McCracken, M, 1987). Durkin (1990) noted that children at risk had the problem of acquisition of reading compounded when coming to school without breakfast and having to cope with home and neighborhood crisis.

Carbo (1990) stated that our educational system has suffered misconceptions about how children learn to read, and how best to help them become readers. She felt the main problem was the fallacy that all children should receive reading

instruction the same way. Furthermore, the use of worksheets and isolated sub-skill lessons have made learning too fragmented rather than a whole process. Allington (1987) concurred, and went on to report the lack of reading comprehension skills being taught. He noted a need for the thinking skills of summarizing and identifying the main idea, to be included in the instruction. He also saw that students needed to have successful experiences in reading and much easy reading on a daily basis. Wade (1990) mentioned that children spent more time decoding words than on comprehending and processing what they had read. They failed to use background knowledge, and lacked the strategies needed for comprehension. Marie Carbo said, "The simple truth is that American students don't read because they associate reading with pain. Students will spend a substantial amount of their free time reading only when the act of reading is easy for them" (Carbo, 1990 p. 27). Anderson, et al (1985) also found poor readers to have unfavorable attitudes toward reading, poor motivation, plus they were frequently inattentive during reading instruction.

Inadequate educational training of teachers was cited by Greenspan and Lodish (1991). Teachers were unable to organize curriculum to meet the needs of differing abilities in the class. Carbo (1990) also believed that little attempt was made to discover the students' interests or how they best learn. Wade (1990) suggested that reading has been taught as an accumulation of skills rather than a complex process involving reasoning and problem solving skills. Weisberger (1992) mentioned the element of risk involved in trying new techniques; many teachers are unwilling to take that chance of failure.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the site, and from the literature included the following elements:

1. varying degrees of readiness skills upon entering grade school,
2. insufficient amount of time spent on actual reading in school and at home,
3. lack of interaction during reading between parent and child, and teacher and child,
4. students unable to transfer prior knowledge to what they read,
5. students insecure with themselves as successful readers,
6. some students insufficiently challenged enough in regard to reading comprehension,
7. specific reading comprehension skills under-emphasized in reading instruction,
8. an over-emphasis on isolated word attack skills rather than reading as a whole,
9. low levels of active participation in the students own reading resulting in poor motivation.
10. a tendency by teachers to hold on to what had worked in the past.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data pointed to varying degrees of readiness skills upon entering grade school, insufficient time spent on the act of reading, lack of interaction during reading time, inability to transfer prior knowledge, and insecurity of students as successful readers. In addition to finding these causes mentioned in literature, the following probable causes were noted; insufficient curricular time devoted to reading comprehension, over-emphasis on isolated word-attack skills, an absence of challenging materials and delivery, poor motivation resulting from low levels of active participation on the students' part, and the tendency by teachers to hold on to what had worked in the past.

The literature search for solution strategies was organized as suggested by these probable cause data. Analysis of these data suggested that a series of questions related to the presentation of reading comprehension skills encompassing the participation of both students and teacher needed to be addressed.

The questions related to reading comprehension involving both the participation of the student and the teacher, included: 1) How do children learn to read? 2) What activities would further promote reading comprehension?

3) What lessons would promote a positive attitude toward reading? 4) What methods would involve the student as an active participant? 5) How can teachers effect the students' self concept as readers? 6) How can teachers make reading instruction a pleasurable time in order to promote life long reading?

These questions suggested that appropriate categories for the literature search should include: Fostering reading comprehension, using language and literature in curricular design, and motivating children through the arts.

In January 1988, the Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education (ICARE) became the first council in the United States primarily concerned with the promotion of a positive reading attitude among students. ICARE's goal was that school and home alike would help students develop positive reading attitudes. Their contention was that liking to read was as important as learning to read. This study on "Developing Positive Attitudes Toward Reading" was published in the journal: Literacy: Celebration and Challenge, 1993. A major concern was that high school students who have the ability to read, do not place value on it or dislike reading entirely. The teachers' role then, became one of encouraging students to be lifelong readers. Among the suggestions made by ICARE to foster positive attitudes toward reading were: reading aloud to students, discussing books, relating books to real experiences, allowing students to use reading creatively in art, music, dramatics, and writing, allowing time for reading, and foremost, to be a model, showing the value of reading (Cramer, 1993). Carbo (1990) and Weisberger (1992) both included similar recommendations for

meaningful reading experiences. McCracken and McCracken (1986) and Routman (1988) referred to this meaningful reading experience as the natural way to read. "If all children are to learn to read and write, they must be immersed in a print environment equivalent in intensity to the oral language environment from which speech emerged." (McCracken and McCracken, 1986 p.1) McCracken and McCracken stressed that whole books, poems, and songs are the beginning of the natural way to learn to read. They pointed out that children were naturally interested in having books and poems read to them, and that repetition of the same books brought children to print in a non-threatening way. Routman (1988) focused on the acquisition of reading as a shared experience, supported and guided by the teacher and other students.

The quality of the basal stories lacked the longer sentences, harder words, and imagery found in the original version of the story. The strategies Routman (1988) suggested, included integrating and extending reading into music and art, thus making it easier for children to learn. To extend a favorite book, the children could illustrate a scene or character, act out the story or make puppets to retell the story. Incorporating this use of children's literature and whole language, in place of a basal program or supplementing the program, would be more child centered. It is the child being taught and not a program. Goldberg (1992) agreed that children depend on the use of song, dramatic play and artistic activity to make sense of what they are learning. She saw that teachers offered students only a few avenues of expression to show their understanding of what they read.

Learning through Extended Arts (LEAP) is a nonprofit educational organization located in New York City. The organization has served more than 400,000 students over the past twelve years. Consultants have found that the stimulation and involvement generated by "hands-on" experience with art and music can help students learn academic subjects. They found that traditional methods of teaching language arts do not meet the needs of all students. One segment of the LEAP program, Promoting Success, was geared toward language arts. It was a five to ten week session in which the basic skills needed for reading and writing were presented with the use of dances, songs, plays, puppet making, murals, and story boards. The consultants utilized these art forms to teach sequencing, main idea, characters, and setting (Dean and Gross, 1992).

Another program developed in New York City in 1971 was called Learning to Read Through the Arts (LTRTA). It was a program that integrated the arts into the curriculum. The arts were the primary vehicle for teaching reading, as well as other content areas. This moved the learner from the concrete to the abstract experience naturally. Children had a practical purpose and they were interested in what they read. Reading was used as a tool for learning more about the arts. The arts motivated the students and gave them the confidence they needed to grow in other areas (Ganley, 1983).

Jalongo (1990) saw the whole curriculum as an opportunity for children to participate in expressive arts. Children were given a reason to learn and in ways

that met their individual learning styles. Children functioned more independently, were given more choices, and were active participants when a school moved to the expressive arts. Hoyt (1992) observed how the visual arts and drama were once saved for enrichment activities or as a break from the skills of reading. In the Chapter One Program in Beaverton, Oregon (Hoyt, 1992), it was found that dramatic interpretations of stories encouraged students to recreate stories with pictures or writing. This type of interaction helped activate the learners' senses, imaginations, emotions, and their own life experiences. This facilitated the learners' affective as well as cognitive self. It engaged the children in communication skills, problem solving skills, and group interaction.

Martinez (1993) reported on a program used in a kindergarten class. This classroom was organized to engage the reader by placing an emphasis on repeated readings of predictable books. One of the key elements was to have many books available, along with access to a flannel board, figures, puppets, and stuffed animals. The children were encouraged to be involved in dramatic story reenactments. (DSR) The involvement in DSR gave the children a sense of story structure and enhanced story comprehension skills.

In another program, music was used to explore literature. The approach of this program was to bring books alive through music. Children's appreciation of the arts and of reading were increased. This was accomplished by chants, rhymes, raps, and children writing their own songs. Music became an integral part of their classroom day. As children found pleasure in reading, they spent

more time reading, and the more they read, the more competent readers they became (Lamme, 1990).

Hanna (1992) also connected the arts to academic achievement. She noted how the arts can encompass the multiple intelligences visually, kinesthetically and linguistically. In several dance programs mentioned in her article, Hanna found children to have a sense of pride and responsibility, self discipline, improved attendance, motivation, and commitment. Success in the arts education programs gave students confidence to take risks in other subject areas.

An increased awareness of the importance of the arts in the classroom was visible in articles appearing in Better Homes and Garden (Thomas, 1992) and the Chicago Tribune (Radnar, 1993). The articles shared ways that arts benefit education. Both journalists recognized the power of the arts to increase a child's creativity, self confidence, ability to transfer learning, and life skills. Martorelli (1992) addressed the same issue when she observed the way arts are able to facilitate communication, crossing language and cultural barriers, and increased self esteem and self discipline.

Oddleifson, President for the Arts in the Basic Curriculum, stated at his February 1992 keynote address to the Wisconsin Alliance for Art Education Summit VI; that when the arts were studied by students, their basic academic skills improved by thirty percent over those who did not study the arts. Better standardized scores were demonstrated along with greater communication skills and creativity. He referred to The Center for Arts in Basic Curriculum and its

examination of schools which introduced a mandatory arts curriculum. The findings also showed higher academic test scores, greater interest in learning, improved self esteem, higher attendance, lower dropout rate, a reduction in disciplinary action, and re-energized teachers. Other benefits mentioned by Oddleifson were: taking an active part in one's own learning, the opportunity to become a risk taker without the fear of failure, and acquiring the tools necessary to become a life long learner. In focusing on the art process used, rather than on the product, students increased their imaginations, expressive skills, problem solving skills, and motivation to learn (Oddleifson, 1992).

A summary of the literature which addressed solutions related to the reading comprehension problem included:

1) Teachers should read aloud to students on a daily basis.
2) Students should be engaged in discussing books, poems, and songs.
3) Activities should relate to real life experiences.
4) Time should be allowed for students to read.
5) There should be repeated readings of the same book.
6) Children's literature should be emphasized rather than the basal readers.
7) Activities should involve an increased use of oral language.
8) Students should be given choices of reading material and encouraged to interact with each other.
9) Activities should extend reading into the areas of art, music, and drama.
10) Teachers need to be good models for reading.

The review of the literature suggested the power of the arts in the area of academic skills, and suggested a need for the reading curriculum to be more meaningful. The inclusion of the arts in the reading curriculum provides students with positive experiences connected with reading. It becomes a more child-centered program with hands-on experiences promoting a positive attitude toward reading and encouraging students to become lifelong readers. The suggested activities would move the students toward a greater understanding of the stories. The arts are used to teach the comprehension skills of identifying the main idea, character and setting; sequencing; inferring; and predicting. One of the vehicles suggested to implement these strategies was to extend reading into the areas of art and music through the use of drama, puppets, flannel boards, creative writing and dance. The implications of the suggestions would mean a movement toward a non-threatening environment that is rich in books for the emergent reader. It would also mean more time spent on meaningful reading activities.

Project Outcomes

The terminal objective of this problem intervention was related to the Parent Survey Data, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and the Checklist for Reading Comprehension. These data indicated that many of the first and second grade students did not see themselves as successful readers and they did not find reading to be an enjoyable experience. The students showed weakness in many of the skills needed for reading comprehension. Probable cause data,

presented in the latter part of Chapter 2, and solution strategies presented in the first part of this chapter, suggested the need for the increased quantity and quality of reading comprehension activities in the reading curriculum, and for the implementation of strategies using the arts to raise students' interest, and the ability to see themselves as successful readers. Probable causes gathered from the literature suggested a need to provide successful reading experiences for children, allow for more time for reading, and provide participatory experiences for the students. Therefore:

> As a result of the use of a creative arts program in literature during the period October, 1993, to February, 1993, the first and second grade classes will increase reading comprehension as measured by teacher observation, including informal reading inventory, and student attitudes test, and parent feedback.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following process objectives defined the major strategic procedures proposed for the problem resolution.

> 1) As a result of the wide exposure to children's literature and successful experiences in the telling, reading, and writing of stories, students will begin to see themselves as successful readers, thus advancing their reading comprehension.
>
> 2) As a result of the use of theater arts, visual arts, language arts, and music integrated into the reading of stories, students will improve in specific skill areas needed for better reading comprehension.

Proposal Solution Components

The major elements of this approach used to increase the reading comprehension fell into three categories; those strategies designed to increase the readers' self confidence; interventions to improve specific skill areas needed for better reading comprehension; and plans designed to improve the curriculum

through the use of the arts, thereby making more probable the desired progress. These elements related to the terminal objective in that they attempted to facilitate the student's ability to see themselves as confident readers, and they attempted to improve specific reading skill areas.

Chapter 4

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Description of Problem Resolution Activities

The action plan is designed to address the major solution components discussed in Chapter 3. Students will be given a wide exposure to children's literature and will participate in varied learning strategies directed at improving reading comprehension. Theatre arts, visual arts, language arts, and music will be integrated with the children's literature to provide practice in specific skill areas needed for better reading comprehension.

The development phase of the action plan will begin in the summer of 1993. The two teachers-researchers will prepare instruments to gather baseline data, study literacy theories, and gather children's literature. These teachers will also meet together and with arts specialists to plan activities and their implementation. These activities, including drama, visual arts, creative writing, and music will be integrated into the reading curriculum.

The improvements sought by the implementation of this plan include: the immersion of the emergent reader into literature; positive experiences for the students to see themselves as successful readers; and improvement of reading comprehension skills through the integration of the arts and reading program.

The implementation plan is presented below in outline form and in chronological order, allowing for the overlapping of strategies over time.

1. Preparation of instruments to collect parent and student information regarding reading habits and reading skills.

   A. Who: The two classroom teachers will prepare the instruments.

   B. What: Development of instruments for baseline data collection.

   C. When: This will occur in the summer of 1993.

   D. Where: This will occur at designated meeting places to be determined by the participating teachers.

   E. How: Parent Questionnaire, Teacher Observation and Reading Inventory Sheets will be prepared in accordance to information that is necessary in order to implement the intervention.

   F. Why: These instruments will be used as resources to guide implementation of the intervention plan.

2. Increase exposure to children's literature and successful experiences in the telling and reading of stories.

   A. Who: The two classroom teachers will meet.

   B. What: Share resources on the subject of literacy and children's books.

   C. When: Meetings will occur in the summer of 1993 and continue during the implementation of the plan.

   D. Where: At the homes of participation teachers and at the library.

   E. How: Acquire reading materials to review reading acquisition, theory and methods of implementation. Review and gather children's literature to

use in this step. Lesson plans that include methods of teaching comprehension skills in the context of the whole reading setting will be explored.

F. Why: These resources will be used to develop a reading plan that seeks to provide successful experiences in the telling and reading of stories. This positive interaction with reading is intended to help students see themselves as successful readers.

3. Increase use of theater arts, visual arts, language arts, and music, and integrate them into reading curriculum.

   A. Who: The two classroom teachers will meet by themselves and with arts' resource people.

   B. What: Information on increasing use of various art forms in conjunction with reading will be shared among the two teachers and specialists through in-service session.

   C. When: In-service meetings will occur in the summer of 1993. Sharing will continue during the fall of 1993 and will be an ongoing process throughout the implementation of the plan.

   D. How: Reading materials to introduce and review use of various arts activities will be shared between the two participating teachers. Other specialists will be consulted as both a resource for activity ideas and implementation of activities.

4. Receive feedback from parents concerning reading in the home.

A. Who: The classroom teachers will obtain this data.

B. What: A Parents Survey will be used.

C. When: This will be given in September of 1993, before the intervention begins.

D. Where: The survey will be completed in the parents' homes.

E. How: The forms will be given to parents at orientation, along with a stamped return envelope to insure anonymity.

F. Why: The researcher seeks to assess parent/child reading habits in relationship to their present ability level.

5. Gather information on students' reading perceptions and skills level.

A. Who: The classroom teachers will obtain this data.

B. What: A student attitude's survey will be administered along with an observation and reading checklist.

C. When: This process will take place in September of 1993 before the start of the intervention.

D. Where: This will take place in the school classrooms in the schools of the two researchers.

E. How: To administer the attitudes survey the teacher will meet with small groups of students or be assisted by an older student. The observations and checklist of skills will be done by the teacher during groups reading, independent reading time and/or individually.

F. Why: The information gathered from these instruments, will facilitate the teachers in the assessment of skills and attitudes of students before intervention strategies.

6. Implement enriched reading curriculum.

   A. Who: The classroom teachers will present language arts lessons.

   B. What: Lessons from resource books along with children's literature will be shared with students.

   C. When: This will take place three to five times a week during the language arts block, beginning in September of 1993 and continuing through February of 1994.

   D. How: The curriculum will include reading activities centered around children's literature, whole language, and independent reading and writing time. The students will participate in activities and be involved in follow-up in oral reading, and writing activities.

   E. Why: These activities will provide students the opportunity to feel successful in the reading process.

7. Implement activities to integrate theater arts, visual arts, language arts, and music in the reading curriculum.

   A. Who: The classroom teachers will act as facilitators in the presentation of these activities.

   B. What: Activities from the different arts areas will be used in conjunction with children's literature.

C. When: These activities will take place two to three times a week during the language arts, music or arts blocks, beginning in November of 1993 and continuing through February of 1994.

D. How: The curriculum will include arts activities centered around children's literature. Teachers will present mini lessons and guide students' activities in the various arts areas.

E. Why: These activities will be implemented as a way to provide students tools to improve specific skills used in reading comprehension.

Methods of Assessment

A variety of data collection methods will be used in order to assess the effects of the intervention. Changes in children's attitudes toward reading will be measured through the use of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey developed by McKenna and Kear (1990). These surveys will be administered to the target group in the winter of 1994, and the results will be compared to the tests given in the fall of 1993. Student reading comprehension will be documented through classroom observations and journal entries.

Changes in the reading comprehension abilities will be determined through the use of the teacher observations, parent feedback, along with a reading checklist. The reading checklist will be administered to the target group in the winter of 1994 and the results compared with the reading checklist given in the fall of 1993.

Chapter 5

EVALUATION OF RESULTS AND PROCESS

Implementation History

The terminal objectives of the intervention addressed the concerns that many of the first and second grade students did not see themselves as successful readers nor did they find reading to be an enjoyable experience. Test scores and a teacher observation checklist indicated that students showed weakness in reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the terminal objective stated:

> As a result of the use of a creative arts program in literature during the period October 1993 to February 1994, the first and second grade classes will increase reading comprehension as measured by teacher observation, including informal reading inventory, and student attitude test, and parent feedback

The following process objectives were used to accomplish the terminal objective:

1) As a result of the wide exposure to children's literature and successful experiences in the telling, reading, and writing of stories, students will begin to see themselves as successful readers, thus advancing their reading comprehension.

2) As a result of the use of theatre arts, visual arts, and music integrated into the reading of stories, students will improve in specific skill areas needed for better reading comprehension.

The preparation of instruments to collect parent and student information regarding reading habits and reading skills took place in the summer of 1993. A Parents' Survey and a Reading Comprehension Checklist were developed and a Student Attitude Survey was adopted for use. The Parents' Survey was sent out to first and second grade parents in September, and mailed back to the schools

to insure anonymity. In late September, the Reading Comprehension Checklist and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) was administered. The Reading Comprehension Checklist was completed through teacher observation during reading groups and independent reading time. The ERAS was given by the teacher with small groups of students. The results of these instruments indicated a need for different strategies in the approach to teaching reading.

The intervention program had two components. The first one dealt with providing students with enriched language arts activities based on children's literature. This phase of the curriculum was ongoing, even after the second component of the use of the arts was introduced.

The beginning of the school year set the tone for the students' attitude toward school and reading. In order to capitalize on the excitement of coming back to school, many books about school experiences were shared. Word lists about school were generated, chants were made, as were rewrites of pattern books. After repetitive readings of books such as Bill Martin's, Brown Bear, Brown Bear and Merle Peek's Mary Wore a Red Dress, students collaborated on brainstorming ideas for class books. The students' version became Brown Bear Goes to School and Jason Wore His Nikes. This rewriting of familiar pattern stories went on through December. Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins became Wanda the Witch's Walk and at Christmas the children wrote Santa's Ride. Laura Numeroff's If You Give a Mouse a Cookie became If You Give a Scarecrow a Hat. Each page was then illustrated by students and made into class books, which were frequently shared

with a partner at reading time. Rewriting these books gave the children pride and ownership, and in a natural way it increased their understanding of the process of writing a story.

The books that repeated phrases, books of singable songs, and books of chants brought confidence to the emergent readers. After class time was spent learning these songs and chants, the students were enthusiastic about selecting these books on their own. Some favorites included, Ruth Brown's A Dark, Dark Tale, Nadine Westcott's Skip To My Lou, Eric Carle's Today is Monday, and McCracken's How Do You Say Hello To A Ghost? The songs that were made into books were well received by the children. By memorizing the songs and chants, the children felt as if they were reading the story at first. As the students progressed, they tracked the words they were singing and then they could read many of the words out of context. They transferred this word recognition to other books they read. Skills such as vowels, word endings, and rhyming words were met with less resistance within this context than in a formal reading workbook.

Poetry was explored using the same approach as was used with songs and chants. The poem for the month was introduced orally and recited over a period of days until it was memorized. The children acted out the storyline of the poem using props and sometimes costumes. Understanding the meaning of the poem was fostered in this way. Two lines of the poem were then written and illustrated each day until a book was made. Skills were taught as the lines were transferred to print. For example, students identified word endings and suffixes on their

pages. This book then became one that the children could read and share at home. The selections of poems included not only those specifically written for children but also more sophisticated pieces such as Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening."

In order to insure a good background of literature, the children were exposed to many genres. This was in addition to the pattern books, poems, songs, and chants. Part of each day was set aside as story time. It was during this time that the teachers and students did author studies and units on nursery rhymes, fables and fairy tales. This experience was valuable later on in the arts intervention because the students were familiar with these stories. The informal reading setting laid the groundwork for predicting, character analyzation, story problems and solutions, main idea and sequencing. This was done during the reading of the stories along with individual reflections and small group discussions. These discussions sparked new ideas for the children's own writing. It led to more original student stories and away from the rewrites of pattern books done at the beginning of the year.

The second phase of the intervention was the integration of the theater arts, visual arts, language arts, and music into the reading curriculum. Beginning in November of 1993, the arts activities intensified as a component of the reading curriculum. These activities took place at least two times a week during the language arts, music or art blocks of the schoolday. The implementation continued through February of 1994.

Before the children were ready to do puppetry, drama or any of the arts, they needed to do some warm-up activities. This provided a stretching of the imagination, awareness of body and space and parameters for behavior. Practice activities were provided in a variety of ways. Students were instructed in methods to increase awareness of their own body movements and space. The students especially enjoyed doing a mirroring activity to music. This mirroring experience was then repeated with the use of puppets, giving the students guidelines in the use of puppets. Puppets were also explored in showing how the character would perform different activities. The children saw a correlation in how they would act something out and how they would have the puppets act it out.

As the books to be acted out were introduced, students had the skills and techniques needed to successfully perform. The children were taken step by step through a dramatization of the story. After the initial reading of the story and a question/discussion time, the whole story or a scene was acted out. The entire class "tried on" the characters simultaneously as the story was read again. For example, in the fable, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, all of the students acted the part of the boy and the townspeople. After the first "run through," character parts were picked and the story was acted again. This procedure was then repeated with other students. The story of Joy Cowley's Mrs. Wishy-Washy had to be repeated four times to meet the students' demand and to satisfy their interest. Later on, students would gather together during "free time" and re-enact their favorite stories. Other stories that lent themselves to dramatization were the classic

children's books of The Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, and The Three Billy Goats Gruff.

In January, different versions of The Mitten were read and dramatized. This story was also retold with the use of puppets. Puppetry was used in a variety of stories. Ready-made puppets, stick puppets, finger puppets as well as paper bag puppets were used to re-tell stories. This became a good "home-sharing" activity.

During some of the puppetry and drama plays, original songs were a natural extension. This was the case for Esphyr Slobodkina's Caps For Sale. The students were able to use the tune of "Are You Sleeping?" and substitute these words: "Caps for sale, caps for sale, 50¢, 50¢. Won't you please buy some? Won't you please buy some? We want more. We want more." Popular children's songs were written on sentence strips and put in a pocket chart to learn. These songs were also illustrated and made into books. A follow up activity was to act out the songs.

Illustrating was a major component of the student-made story and song books. Students were also given other opportunities in the visual arts. Illustrations were made of the characters, the settings, and favorite scenes of the stories. Whole stories were depicted in sequence panels. When the children had the opportunity to illustrate Hansel and Gretel in panels, it facilitated the re-telling of the story to classmates and family. The making of murals in small groups was another way stories were illustrated as a sequence and a whole. Students who were not confident readers found success in the visualization of the story.

Students went back to the familiar storybooks with more confidence and a better understanding after participating in puppetry, dramatization, and art activities related to the books. A literature list used by the classroom teachers is included in Appendix F.

Presentation and Analysis of Project Results

In order to assess the effects of the intervention strategies, students' attitudes toward reading were measured by using the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. The results of the pre and post survey are presented in appendices D and E and summarized in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Number and Percent of First Grade Students in Percentile Ranges
Pretest of ERAS, Recreational and Academic
September 1993 and March 1994

	Recreational				Academic			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
%ile Range	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
76-99	6	24	10	40	6	24	7	28
51-75	8	32	10	40	6	24	7	28
26-50	8	32	4	16	10	40	10	40
0-25	3	12	1	4	3	12	1	4

N = 25

Table 4

Number and Percent of Second Grade Student in Percentile Ranges, Pretest of ERAS, Recreational and Academic September 1993 and March 1994

	Recreational				Academic			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
%ile Range	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
76-99	4	19	10	48	2	10	9	43
51-75	2	10	3	14	8	38	5	24
26-50	7	33	5	24	8	38	4	19
0-25	8	38	3	14	3	14	3	14

N = 21

Using the post test results, forty percent of the first graders and forty-eight percent of the second graders were at or above the seventy-sixth percentile range in their attitude toward recreational reading. In the first grade there were sixteen percent more of the students that fell into this top quartile. In the second grade, there was an increase of twenty-nine percent of students in the top quartile. Attitudes toward academic reading showed that twenty-eight percent of the first graders and forty-three percent of the second graders were at or above the seventy-sixth percentile range. This showed an increase of four percent of the first grade students and thirty-three percent of the second graders scoring in this quartile range.

Summary data showed a decrease in the percent of students who appeared at or below the twenty-fifth percentile range in their attitude toward recreational

reading. On the post test, four percent of the first graders were in this range which was a decrease of eight percent from the pretest. On the post test, fourteen percent of the second graders were in this range which was a decrease of twenty-four percent from the pretest. In the area of academic reading, the number of first grade students decreased from twelve percent to four percent, and the second grade students remained at fourteen percent at this quartile. While the results of this data indicated an increase in the number of students with good attitudes toward recreational and academic reading, there was a greater increase in the percent of students who had positive attitudes toward recreational reading. In looking over the question of the academic part of the survey, many dealt with traditional reading groups, such as the basal text and workbook pages. During the course of the intervention, students were less aware of when reading time was because of the interventions of the arts.

The Checklist for Reading Comprehension was completed as a follow up in March (Appendix A). The same major areas were examined; 1) predictions 2) word meaning 3) main idea 4) sequencing. The data from the checklist indicated that seventy-six percent of the first graders and eighty percent of the second graders were often able to make predictions about the story. Sixty-eight percent of the first graders and sixty-two percent of the second graders were able to determine word meaning through context. Data indicated that eighty-four percent of the first graders and sixty-two percent of the second graders could often tell the main idea of the story. It should be noted that no first grade children

fell into the "rarely category" on the checklist, and only fourteen percent of the second graders could rarely tell the main idea of the story. This was a significant decrease from the forty percent of the first graders and forty-three percent of the second graders who could not tell the main idea of the story in September. The last area to be examined was the ability of students to re-tell a story in sequence. Figures in September showed that forty percent of the first graders and forty-seven percent of the second graders experienced difficulty in sequencing. Data from the March checklist showed that ninety-two percent of the first graders and sixty-two percent of the second graders were able to re-tell most stories in sequence. The figures showed that all children could re-tell the story sometimes. The combination of both good literature and art activities became a medium for reinforcing these reading comprehension skills. Acting out the story, doing art work about the story, and using puppets to re-tell a story, increased the student's ability to understand the main idea and sequence of the story. Transference of these skills was seen with independent reading and stories from the basal text.

The terminal objective and process objectives of the action plan considered the students' needs for improving reading comprehension through exposure to children's literature and integrating the arts. During the intervention, students were exposed to reading through a variety of media. With the use of literature and the various arts, the quality of the time spent on reading was increased. The children were engaged in more meaningful activities within the same time constraints.

Group activities found the reluctant reader more relaxed and not having the

fear of failure. These students were more motivated and they felt successful with their reading experience. Teacher observations noted that students would choose to re-read the books they were familiar with during silent reading time. They would also act out stories on their own that had been acted out as a group. Children were more confident in using word attack strategies in their approach to unlocking new words. In their journal writing and creative writing it was noticed that students had more to say and the stories had a beginning, middle and end.

During the March "Parent-Teacher Conferences," parents' comments about the reading program were elicited. Some of the comments dealt with improved student attitudes toward reading, more time spent reading together at the students' request, and an increased frequency in trips to the library. Reading had gone from a reluctance to practice the basal stories at home to an enthusiastic response to literature. Parents perceived their children as more confident readers and this was shown by the students wanting to read books brought from home to their peers. This interest in reading showed a transfer from classroom activities to recreational reading and the children were on their way to becoming lifelong readers.

Chapter 6

DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE

The Solution Strategy

The data indicate that the reading comprehension intervention should be continued. The students' perception of academic reading remains an area of concern. The workbook approach does not stimulate the children even in conjunction with the arts activities. More attention needs to be placed on integrating the skills into literature lessons. Reading should not be broken down to skills taught in isolation but rather as a sharing of a whole book. When students were actively engaged in reading and writing, the teachers had a better way to assess their skills. The intervention of the arts activities and whole language approach, could be extended to satisfy these needs. A major component of this action plan was to provide students with more choices. Students shared more responsibility in their learning and their involvement in the story made it a more personal experience. As the teachers, we had the role of facilitators as opposed to instructors. Students were empowered when they were engaged in meaningful reading activities. Teaching reading through the arts was a positive experience for the teachers and the enthusiasm carried over to the students. A goal for any reading program is for a child to find enjoyment in reading and this intervention was a successful vehicle to this end.

Additional Applications

In order for an intervention plan such as this to be implemented, a teacher needs to be willing to make changes from a traditional approach. The whole child must be considered. So often a child is labeled as a slow learner by the reading group name such as the "Redbirds." This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Teachers pulling away from the basal feel overwhelmed by the demands of planning a new curriculum. It needs to be remembered that even small changes like integrating literature and arts activities into the existing program will be beneficial. As the teachers become confident and gain trust in their students' achievement this process will naturally be extended.

There is a further application in the use of reading and the arts to other subject areas. As students are learning concepts of science and events in history, literature can play a major role. Activities centered around creative drama, puppetry, song writing and dance can provide meaningful experiences to the lessons. This is a natural extension of this intervention.

Dissemination of Data and Recommendations

Currently there is little direction being provided by the school district regarding the teaching of reading. There are no uniform policies concerning the instructional materials. No texts are being purchased and teachers have the choice of using the basal or moving toward whole language. Inservices need to be provided to assist teachers in the integration of literature and the arts into the

reading curriculum. The art and music specialists need to be included in inservices to facilitate integration and coordination of the arts., Workshops could be given on a more informal basis where grade level teachers would share the activities done involving literature and the arts. Grade level newsletters would be another good way to exchange ideas with other schools. Teachers could submit lessons that have been successful. Both the informal workshops and the newsletters would provide the support needed in beginning a new program.

Another key factor in the implementation of the program is making parents feel involved. The survey was a good way to receive parent input and it provided incite into their child as a reader. Monthly newsletters continue to keep parents informed of the various activities that are happening in the classroom and ideas for follow-ups at home.

The question of assessment is an important issue to be addressed as part of the program. This year the Stanford Achievement Tests are not being given to first and second graders. Teachers still need to be accountable for their students' progress. Anecdotal records and teacher observations are a way to assess student progress. The checklist devised for this project (Appendix A) became a way to measure specific skills. Portfolios of students' work would be another tool to observe their performance. The children can see their own growth and the parents can readily see their child's development.

This intervention brought to the forefront the importance of the atmosphere needed for successful readers to emerge. In providing a natural setting for

reading, the teachers and students interacted in pleasurable activities. The quality of time spent in involvement with the arts and literature made this a valuable experience.

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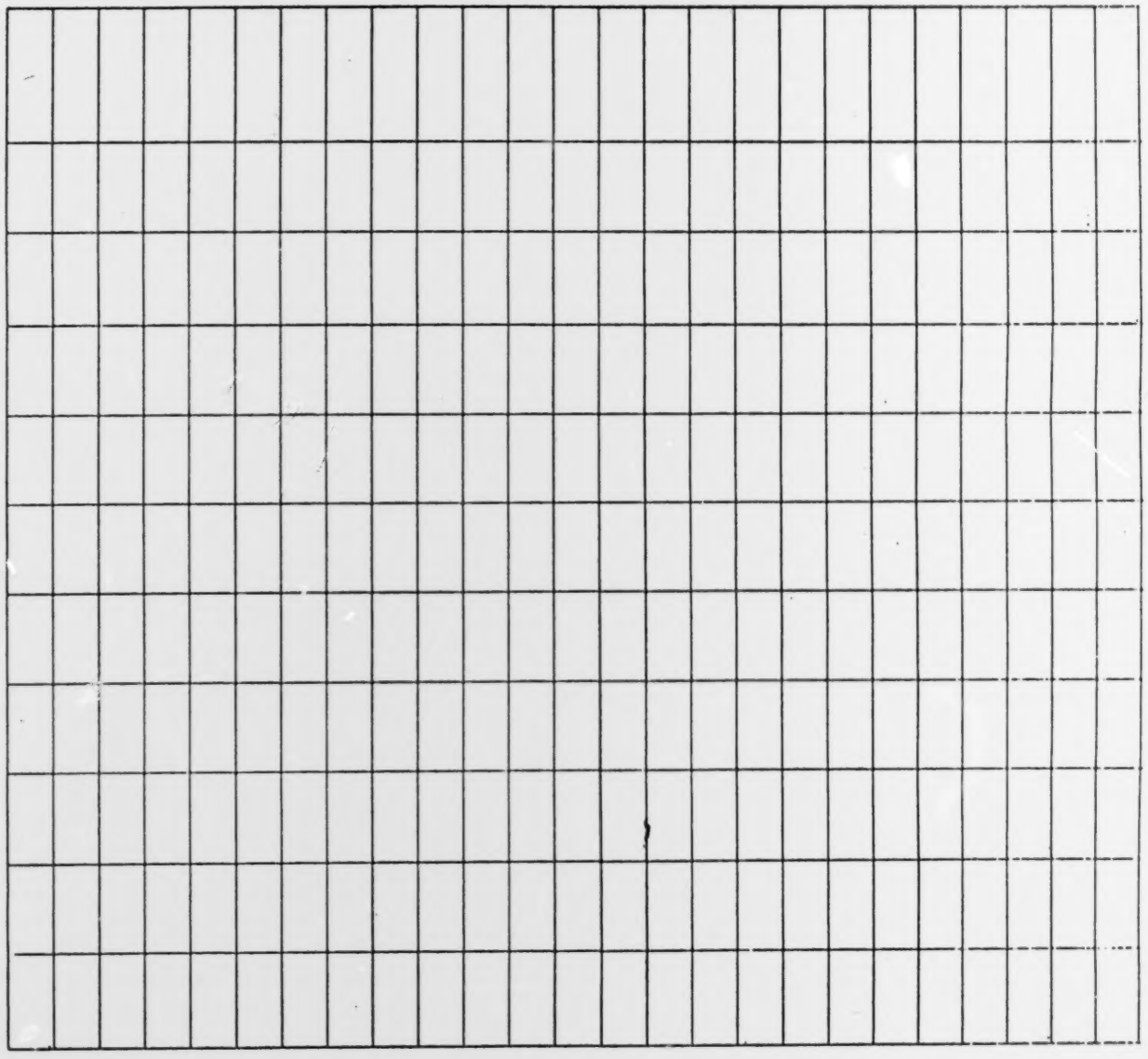
CHECKLIST FOR READING COMPREHENSION



Student's Name

Participates in discussion

Has background knowledge for story.

Makes predictions about story.

Determines word meaning through context.

Answers comprehensive questions.

Can describe character attributes.

Can tell main idea of story.

Can re-tell a story in sequence.

Can differentiate between fantasy and realistic fiction.

Often	+
Sometimes	S
Rarely	R

Appendix B

Part 1 - Your Child as a Reader

Please mark an X for often, sometimes, or rarely to show what best describes your child as a reader.

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Likes to be read to.			
Wants to read a book over again.			
Can guess how a story will end.			
Asks what words say.			
Joins in on familiar stories.			
Reads easy books.			
Acts out favorite stories.			
Can retell a story in the right order.			
Has confidence as a reader.			
Chooses to look at or read books by themselves.			
Reads books from the Public Library.			
Read or was read to over the summer.			

Part 2

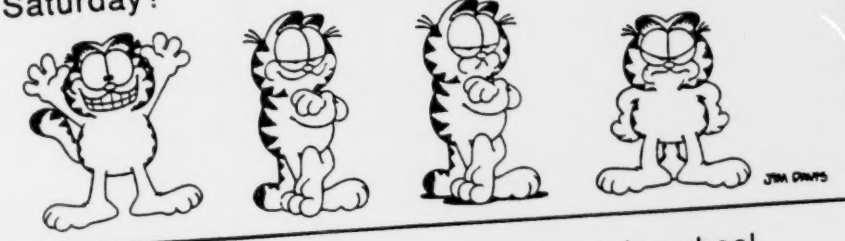
1. At what age did you begin to read to your child? _____
2. How often do you read to your child? _____
3. Does your child have their own personal library? _____
4. What is your child's attitude toward reading? _____
   _____
5. What problems do you see your child having in reading? _____
   _____
6. What is your child's favorite book? _____

APPENDIX C

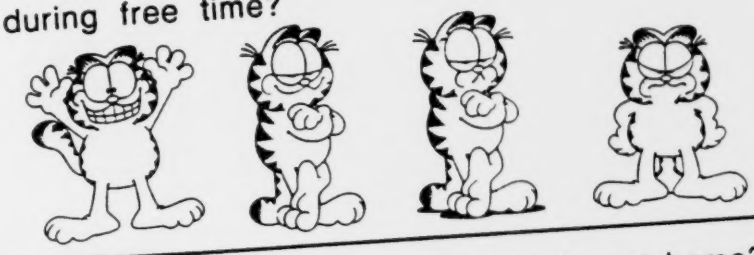
ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

School_____ Grade___ Name_____

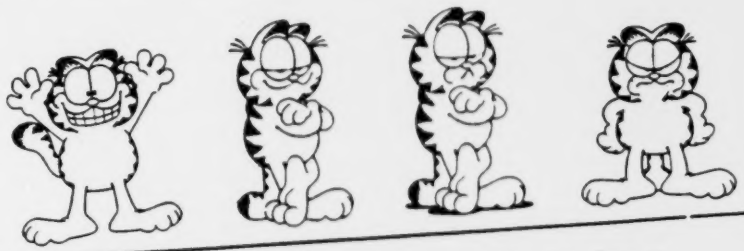
1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



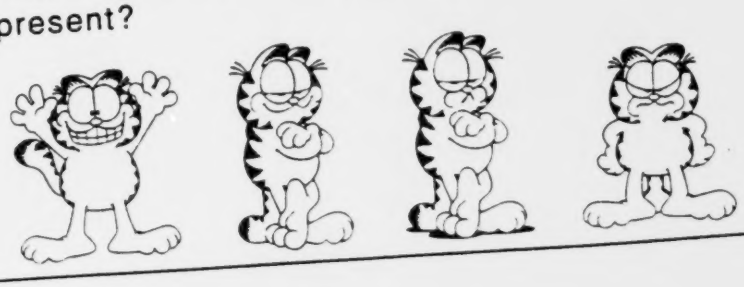
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?



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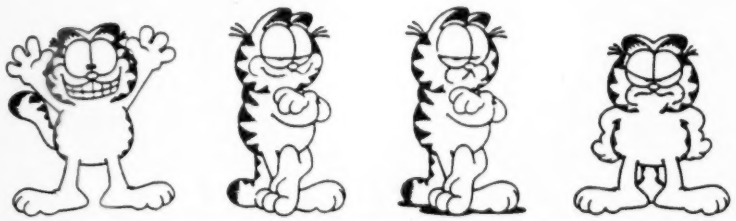
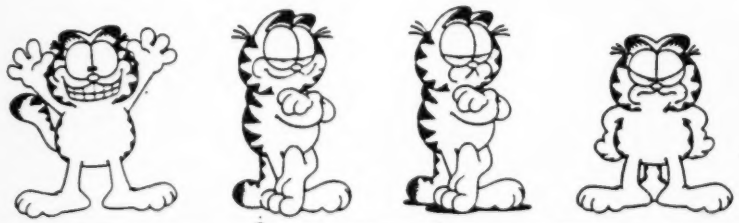
5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?

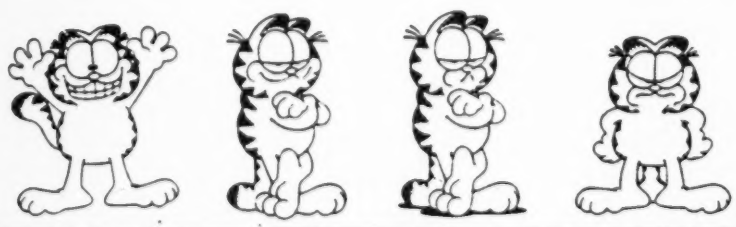


6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?

8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



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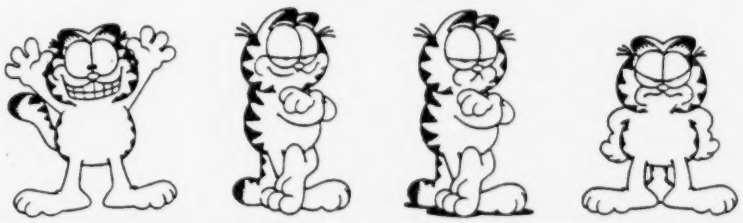
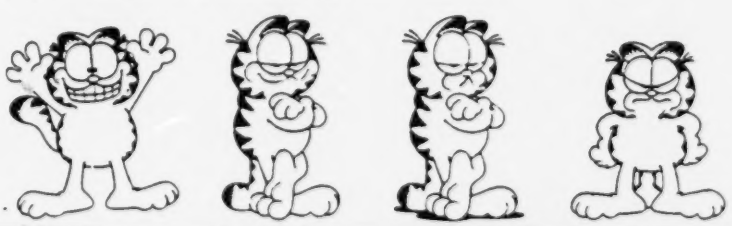
9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?

11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?



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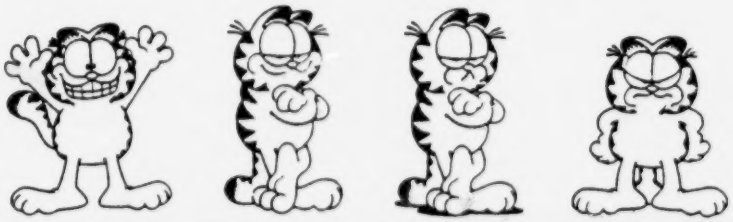
13. How do you feel about reading in school?



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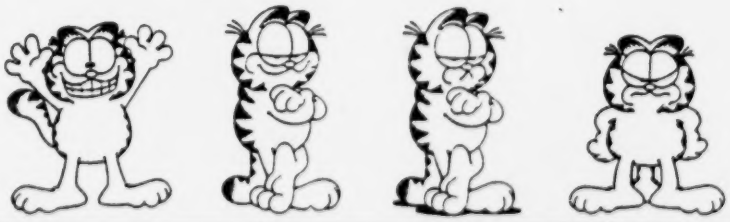
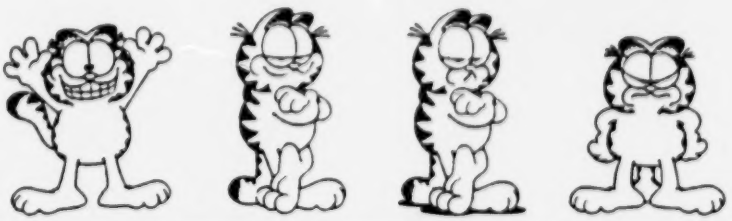
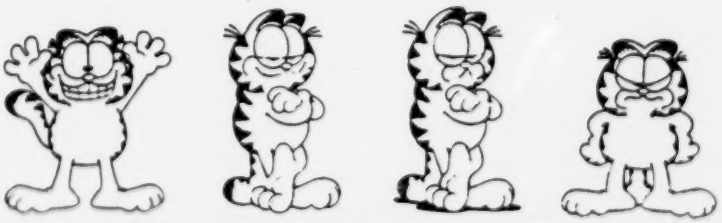
14. How do you feel about reading your school books?



15. How do you feel about learning from a book?



16. How do you feel when it's time for reading class?



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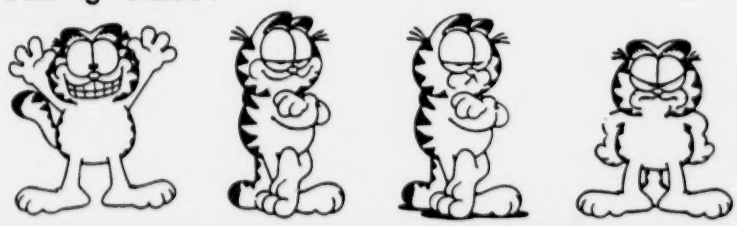
17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?



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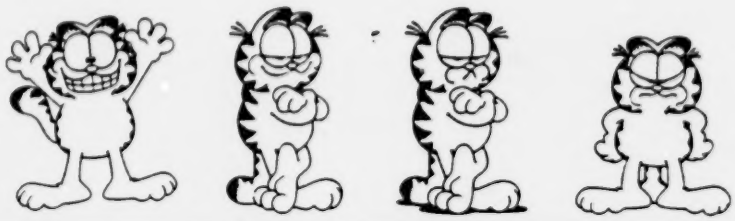
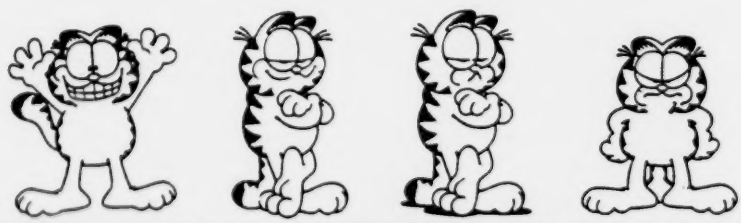
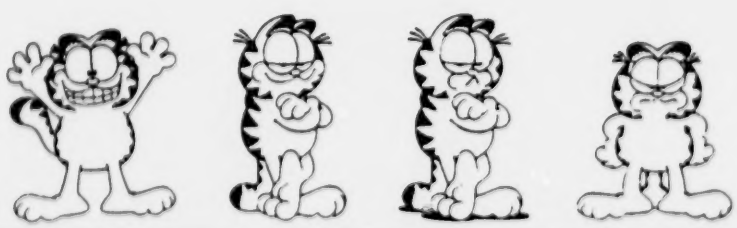
18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



63

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
Directions for use

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey provides a quick indication of student attitudes toward reading. It consists of 20 items and can be administered to an entire classroom in about 10 minutes. Each item presents a brief, simply-worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative.

Administration

Begin by telling students that you wish to find out how they feel about reading. Emphasize that this is *not* a test and that there are no "right" answers. Encourage sincerity.

Distribute the survey forms and, if you wish to monitor the attitudes of specific students, ask them to write their names in the space at the top. Hold up a copy of the survey so that the students can see the first page. Point to the picture of Garfield at the far left of the first item. Ask the students to look at this same picture on their own survey form. Discuss with them the mood Garfield seems to be in (very happy). Then move to the next picture and again discuss Garfield's mood (this time, a *little* happy). In the same way, move to the third and fourth pictures and talk about Garfield's moods—a little upset and very upset. It is helpful to point out the position of Garfield's *mouth*, especially in the middle two figures.

Explain that together you will read some statements about reading and that the students should think about how they feel about each statement. They should then circle the picture of Garfield that is closest to their own feelings. (Emphasize that the students should respond according to their own feelings, not as Garfield might respond!) Read each item aloud slowly and distinctly; then read it a second time while students are thinking. Be sure to read the item *number* and to remind students of page numbers when new pages are reached.

Scoring

To score the survey, count four points for each leftmost (happiest) Garfield circled, three for each slightly smiling Garfield, two for each mildly upset Garfield, and one point for each very upset (rightmost) Garfield. Three scores for each student can be obtained: the total for the first 10 items, the total for the second 10, and a composite total. The first half of the survey relates to attitude toward recreational reading; the second half relates to attitude toward academic aspects of reading.

Interpretation

You can interpret scores in two ways. One is to note informally where the score falls in regard to the four nodes of the scale. A total score of 50, for example, would fall about mid-way on the scale, between the slightly happy and slightly upset figures, therefore indicating a relatively indifferent overall attitude toward reading. The other approach is more formal. It involves converting the raw scores into percentile ranks by means of Table 1. Be sure to use the norms for the right grade level and to note the column headings (Rec = recreational reading, Aca = academic reading, Tot = total score). If you wish to determine the average percentile rank for your class, average the raw scores first; then use the table to locate the percentile rank corresponding to the raw score mean. Percentile ranks cannot be averaged directly.

APPENDIX

Technical aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

The norming project

To create norms for the interpretation of scores, a large-scale study was conducted in late January, 1989, at which time the survey was administered to 18,138 students in Grades 1-6. A number of steps were taken to achieve a sample that was sufficiently stratified (i.e., reflective of the American population) to allow confident generalizations. Children were drawn from 95 school districts in 38 U.S. states. The number of girls exceeded by only 5 the number of boys. Ethnic distribution of the sample was also close to that of the U.S. population (*Statistical abstract of the United States*, 1989). The proportion of Blacks (9.5%) was within 3% of the national proportion, while the proportion of Hispanics (6.2%) was within 2%.

Percentile ranks at each grade for both subscales and the full scale are presented in Table 1. These data can be used to compare individual students' scores with the national sample and they can be interpreted like achievement-test percentile ranks.

Table 1
Mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale

Raw	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6		
Scr	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot
80			99			99			99			99			99			99
79			95			96			98			99			99			99
78			93			95			97			98			99			99
77			92			94			97			98			99			99
76			90			93			96			97			98			99
75			88			92			95			96			98			99
74			86			90			94			95			97			99
73			84			88			92			94			97			98
72			82			86			91			93			96			98
71			80			84			89			91			95			97
70			78			82			86			89			94			96
69			75			79			84			88			92			95
68			72			77			81			86			91			93
67			69			74			79			83			89			92
66			66			71			76			80			87			90
65			62			69			73			78			84			88
64			59			66			70			75			82			86
63			55			63			67			72			79			84
62			52			60			64			69			76			82
61			49			57			61			66			73			79
60			46			54			58			62			70			76
59			43			51			55			59			67			73
58			40			47			51			56			64			69
57			37			45			48			53			61			66
56			34			41			44			48			57			62
55			31			38			41			45			53			58
54			28			35			38			41			50			55
53			25			32			34			38			46			52
52			22			29			31			35			42			48
51			20			26			28			32			39			44
50			18			23			25			28			36			40
49			15			20			23			26			33			37
48			13			18			20			23			29			33
47			12			15			17			20			26			30
46			10			13			15			18			23			27
45			8			11			13			16			20			25
44			7			9			11			13			17			22
43			6			8			9			12			15			20
42			5			7			8			10			13			17
41			5			6			7			9			12			15
40	99	99	4	99	99	5	99	99	6	99	99	7	99	99	10	99	99	13
39	92	91	3	94	94	4	96	97	5	97	98	6	98	99	9	99	99	12
38	89	88	3	92	92	3	94	95	4	95	97	5	96	98	8	97	99	10

37	86	85	2	88	89	2	90	93	3	92	95	4	94	98	7	95	99	8
36	81	79	2	84	85	2	87	91	2	88	93	3	91	96	6	92	98	7
35	77	75	1	79	81	1	81	88	2	84	90	3	87	95	4	88	97	6
34	72	69	1	74	78	1	75	83	2	78	87	2	82	93	4	83	95	5
33	65	63	1	68	73	1	69	79	1	72	83	2	77	90	3	79	93	4
32	58	58	1	62	67	1	63	74	1	66	79	1	71	86	3	74	91	3
31	52	53	1	56	62	1	57	69	0	60	75	1	65	82	2	69	87	2
30	44	49	1	50	57	0	51	63	0	54	70	1	59	77	1	63	82	2
29	38	44	0	44	51	0	45	58	0	47	64	1	53	71	1	58	78	1
28	32	39	0	37	46	0	38	52	0	41	58	1	48	66	1	51	73	1
27	26	34	0	31	41	0	33	47	0	35	52	1	42	60	1	46	67	1
26	21	30	0	25	37	0	26	41	0	29	46	0	36	54	0	39	60	1
25	17	25	0	20	32	0	21	36	0	23	40	0	30	49	0	34	54	0
24	12	21	0	15	27	0	17	31	0	19	35	0	25	42	0	29	49	0
23	9	18	0	11	23	0	13	26	0	14	29	0	20	37	0	24	42	0
22	7	14	0	8	18	0	9	22	0	11	25	0	16	31	0	19	36	0
21	5	11	0	6	15	0	6	18	0	9	20	0	13	26	0	15	30	0
20	4	9	0	4	11	0	5	14	0	6	16	0	10	21	0	12	24	0
19	2	7		2	8		3	11		5	13		7	17		10	20	
18	2	5		2	6		2	8		3	9		6	13		8	15	
17	1	4		1	5		1	5		2	7		4	9		6	11	
16	1	3		1	3		1	4		2	5		3	6		4	8	
15	0	2		0	2		0	3		1	3		2	4		3	6	
14	0	2		0	1		0	1		1	2		1	2		1	3	
13	0	1		0	1		0	1		0	1		1	2		1	2	
12	0	1		0	0		0	0		0	1		0	1		0	1	
11	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	
10	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha, a statistic developed primarily to measure the internal consistency of attitude scales (Cronbach, 1951), was calculated at each grade level for both subscales and for the composite score. These coefficients ranged from .74 to .89 and are presented in Table 2.

It is interesting that with only two exceptions, coefficients were .80 or higher. These were for the recreational subscale at Grades 1 and 2. It is possible that the stability of young children's attitudes toward leisure reading grows with their decoding ability and familiarity with reading as a pastime.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics and internal consistency measures

		Recreational Subscale				Academic Subscale				Full Scale (Total)			
Grade	N	M	SD	SeM	Alpha[a]	M	SD	SeM	Alpha	M	SD	SeM	Alpha
1	2,518	31.0	5.7	2.9	.74	30.1	6.8	3.0	.81	61.0	11.4	4.1	.87
2	2,974	30.3	5.7	2.7	.78	28.8	6.7	2.9	.81	59.1	11.4	3.9	.88
3	3,151	30.0	5.6	2.5	.80	27.8	6.4	2.8	.81	57.8	10.9	3.8	.88
4	3,679	29.5	5.8	2.4	.83	26.9	6.3	2.6	.83	56.5	11.0	3.6	.89
5	3,374	28.5	6.1	2.3	.86	25.6	6.0	2.5	.82	54.1	10.8	3.6	.89
6	2,442	27.9	6.2	2.2	.87	24.7	5.8	2.5	.81	52.5	10.6	3.5	.89
All	18,138	29.5	5.9	2.5	.82	27.3	6.6	2.7	.83	56.8	11.3	3.7	.89

[a]Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

Validity

Evidence of construct validity was gathered by several means. For the recreational subscale, students in the national norming group were asked (a) whether a public library was available to them and (b) whether they currently had a library card. Those to whom libraries were available were separated into two groups (those with and without cards) and their recreational scores were compared. Cardholders had significantly higher ($p < .001$) recreational scores ($M = 30.0$) then noncardholders ($M = 28.9$), evidence of the subscale's validity in that scores varied predictably with an outside criterion.

A second test compared students who presently had books checked out from their school library versus students who did not. The comparison was limited to children whose teachers reported not requiring them to check out books. The means of the two groups varied significantly ($p < .001$), and children with books checked out scored higher ($M = 29.2$) than those who had no books checked out ($M = 27.3$).

A further test of the recreational subscale compared students who reported watching an average of less than 1 hour of television per night with students who reported watching more than 2 hours per night. The recreational mean for the low televiewing group (31.5) significantly exceeded ($p < .001$) the mean of the heavy televiewing group (28.6). Thus, the amount of television watched varied inversely with children's attitudes toward recreational reading.

The validity of the academic subscale was tested by examining the relationship of scores to reading ability. Teachers categorized norm-group children as having low, average, or high overall reading ability. Mean subscale scores of the high-ability readers ($M = 27.7$) significantly exceeded the mean of low-ability readers ($M = 27.0$, $p < .001$), evidence that scores were reflective of how the students truly felt about reading for academic purposes.

The relationship between the subscales was also investigated. It was hypothesized that children's attitudes toward recreational and academic reading would be moderately but not highly correlated. Facility with reading is likely to affect these two areas similarly, resulting in similar attitude scores. Nevertheless, it is easy to imagine children prone to read for pleasure but disenchanted with assigned reading and children academically engaged but without interest in reading outside of school. The intersubscale correlation coefficient was .64, which meant that just 41% of the variance in one set of scores could be accounted for by the other. It is reasonable to suggest that the two subscales, while related, also reflect dissimilar factors—a desired outcome.

To tell more precisely whether the traits measured by the survey corresponded to the two subscales, factor analyses were conducted. Both used the unweighted least squares method of extraction and a varimax rotation. The first analysis permitted factors to be identified liberally (using a limit equal to the smallest eigenvalue greater than 1). Three factors were identified. Of the 10 items comprising the academic subscale, 9 loaded predominantly on a single factor while the 10th (item 13) loaded nearly equally on all three factors. A second factor was dominated by 7 items of the recreational subscale, while 3 of the recreational items (6, 9, and 10) loaded principally on a third factor. These items did, however, load more heavily on the second (recreational) factor than on the first (academic). A second analysis constrained the identification of factors to two. This time, with one exception, all items loaded cleanly on factors associated with the two subscales. The exception was item 13, which could have been interpreted as a recreational item and thus apparently involved a slight ambiguity. Taken together, the factor analyses produced evidence extremely supportive of the claim that the survey's two subscales reflect discrete aspects of reading attitude.

Appendix D

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey of 1st Grade Class
Pretest Recreational, Academic and Total Data in Percentiles
September 1993 and March 1994

STU. #	REC		ACAD		TOT	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
1	24	32	23	44	12	37
2	72	81	75	53	75	69
3	9	12	0	1	5	2
4	86	58	49	30	69	40
5	32	58	53	75	43	69
6	52	86	34	88	40	88
7	38	38	30	39	62	37
8	32	81	88	90	66	90
9	38	32	44	44	40	37
10	86	99	91	99	90	99
11	81	81	75	79	80	82
12	89	92	81	88	86	92
13	65	72	26	58	46	66
14	26	38	30	34	25	40
15	72	58	63	92	69	80
16	86	72	99	63	92	69
17	17	52	39	25	53	34
18	72	72	53	44	62	55
19	58	72	21	30	34	46
20	58	52	34	58	43	55
21	38	65	79	63	62	66
22	33	77	37	44	78	59
23	89	99	99	99	93	99
24	72	81	75	75	75	80
25	38	89	30	44	62	69

Appendix E

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey of 2nd Grade Class
Pretest Recreational, Academic and Total Data in Percentiles
September 1993 and March 1994

STU. #	REC		ACAD		TOT	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
1	88	84	62	57	77	71
2	25	6	32	46	26	20
3	15	79	41	85	26	84
4	44	79	27	51	32	66
5	25	62	62	85	45	77
6	50	11	18	41	29	23
7	50	37	67	62	60	51
8	20	44	27	51	20	51
9	68	44	57	78	63	63
10	15	56	32	23	51	35
11	94	92	99	78	96	86
12	37	84	57	92	47	90
13	25	44	2	8	6	18
14	37	50	11	5	18	15
15	84	99	73	99	79	99
16	74	79	51	27	63	51
17	94	62	94	85	95	77
18	15	15	37	57	23	35
19	31	99	37	99	32	99
20	37	88	51	99	45	94
21	6	92	37	41	15	69

Appendix F

Songs, Chants, Repetitive Books

A Dark, Dark Tale, Brown, 1984 Dial Books for Young Readers, New York.

A House Is A House For Me, Hoberman, 1978, Viking Penguin, New York.

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Martin 1983, Holt and Company, New York.

Cat Goes Fiddle-I-Fee, Galdone, 1985, Clarion Books, New York.

Five Little Monkeys Jumping On The Bed, Christelow, 1989, Houghton Mifflin, New York.

Fire! Fire! Said Mrs. McGuire, Martin, 1982, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., Toronto.

How Do You Say Hello To A Ghost? McCracken, 1986, Pegasus Publishers Limited, Winnipeg.

Hush Little Baby, Aliki, 1968, Prentice Hall, Inc. New York.

If You Give A Mouse A Cookie, Numeroff, 1985, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

Jump, Frog, Jump!, Kalan, 1981, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

Mary Wore A Red Dress And Henry Wore His Green Sneakers, Peek, 1985, Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin Co., New York.

Over In The Meadow, Langstaff, 1973, Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Publishers, New York.

Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? Martin, 1991, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York.

Rain, Kalon, 1978, Mulberry Books, New York.

Rosie's Walk, Hutchins, 1987, Scholastic Inc., New York.

Skip To My Lou, Westcott, 1989, Little Brown and Company, Boston Mass.

The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything, Williams, 1986, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York.

The Teeny Tiny Woman, Sueling, 1978, Penguin Books, New York.

There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly, Adams, 1973, Child's Play Ltd., Singapore.

Today Is Monday, Carle, 1993, Scholastic Inc., New York.

Books For Dramatization and Puppetry

Caps For Sale, Slobodkina, 1984, Scholastic, New York.

Dance Away, Shannon, 1982, Greenwillow Books, New York.

Fin M'Coul The Giant of Knockmany Hill, DePaola, 1992, The Trumpet Club, New York.

Hansel and Gretel, Gross, 1974, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

Ira Sleeps Over, Waber, 1975 Scholastic, Inc., New York.

Lizard's Song, Shannon, 1981 Greenwillow Books, New York.

Mrs. Wishy-Washy, Cowley, 1987, The Wright Group, San Diego.

Stone Soup, McGovern, 1986 Scholastic, Inc., New York.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Littledale, 1975, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

The Enormous Turnip, Southgate, 1970, Ladybird Books, Loughborough, England.

The Mitten, Brett, 1989, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

The Mitten, Tresselt, 1964, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

The Three Bears and 15 Other Stories, Rockwell, 1975, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Carle, 1987, Scholastic, New York.

Why The Sun And The Moon Live In The Sky, Dayrell, 1968, Scholastic, Inc., New York.

Poetry

September--"The First Day Of School" by Aileen Fisher

October--"The Broomstick Train" by Oliver Wendall Holmes

November--"Jim" by Gwendolyn Brooks

December--"What Then?" by Mabel F. Hill

January--"I Have A Dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr.

February--"Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost

March--"Weird" by Judith Viorst

April--"From Sink To Stove To Cupboard" by Dorothy Aldis

May--"About The Teeth Of Sharks" by Jack Prelutsky